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Notes and Documents

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OPEN LETTER FROM THE PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS OF AZANIA IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT F. W. DE KLERK'S INVITATION TO ATTEND THE MULTI-PARTY CONFERENCE ON VIOLENCE

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We acknowledge receipt of Mr. F. W. de Klerk's invitation dated 6 May 1991 to the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) to attend the multi-party conference on violence on 24-25 May and we wish to respond thereto as follows:

1. **Peace within the context of violence**

By its very existence and nature, the whole social formation of racist South Africa presupposes violence. The existence of a Government that took our land by violent means and that maintains itself by the force of arms, as opposed to the will of the people, contextualizes the whole framework of the society within which the current violence is taking place. The question of the Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB), Askaris and other death squads employed by the State would never arise under a Government of the people, by the people and for the people. Absence of genuine democracy *per se* engenders violence.

2. **Sincere invitation or conscience-soother**

The fact that a large number of PAC leaders, including its first Deputy President, Mr. Johnson Mlambo, are not allowed to return to their motherland in a dignified and unconditional manner and the fact that PAC leaders like Enoch Zulu, a member of our National Executive Council, are still in the regime's prison for fighting for a just, democratic and peaceful society, enjoins PAC to consider whether the regime, which invites us yet at the same time restricts our leaders from being in the country, sincerely expects us to attend the conference on violence, or extended the invitation merely as a tactical conscience-soother.

3. **Background to the internecine violence**

The current spate of internecine violence can be traced to the 1984-1986 period when the State responded to mass resistance by, *inter alia*, using vigilante groups such as the Witdoeke and by taking direct action against the African masses in attacks like the "Trojan Horse" incident. It is no coincidence that most of these attacks on the oppressed people have been directed primarily at communities that are highly politicized and show a heightened capacity for resistance against State repressive structures.

This violent action is still continuing with the recruitment of Renamo and other killer groups that stalk the African people by day and night.

Special murder squads have been established with the sole purpose of terrorising and killing the African people. The notorious CCB has not disbanded. Three weeks ago the chairman of PAC's Kagiso branch was arrested by the South African police and

tortured by an Askari who is a former member of PAC. All former PAC members-turned-Askaris are still in the employment of the State and paid to perpetuate violence against our members. During the last two months about 40 PAC members were arrested with the intention of using torture to turn them against their own people. One of them was put on national television whilst in detention in order to fuel violence between PAC and the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC).

The above clearly indicates the continued involvement of the State in the ongoing violence. The doctrine of "clean hands" disqualifies the regime from convening any conference. The State must recuse itself from the convening chair as it is a party to the conflict and has an interest of its own in the outcome of the deliberations.

4. **Legal responsibility versus ideological orientation**

We concur with international law that all Governments, including colonial and de facto regimes, have a legal responsibility to treat its subjects in a humane and dignified manner. In this context, all calls for the South African regime to end the violence are legally sound and justified.

The ideology of the settler colonial capitalist State necessarily leads to the creation and maintenance of a police force and army that are set on protecting the interests of the minority and the bosses of the oppressed African masses. For this reason the African masses have formed their own parties and armies. The only way the security forces of the settler State can possibly respond to the demands of the masses is through repression. Hence, every intervention in the violent situations by the South African police force is followed by a complaint by the masses against their curfews, emergency declarations and repression. It follows that all calls for the South African security forces to end the violence in our interest is politically naive even though it is legally justifiable. It also follows that the African people must defend themselves and resolve their own problems for they are their own liberators and have the necessary ideological orientation to act in their own interests without any reservation.

5. **Campaign of destabilization**

The South African settler racist regime has, for many years, played a key role in destabilizing several African countries in this region. In that way it has undermined the efforts of several front-line States in addressing the interests of the African masses at the expense of Western interests. This campaign inevitably led to violence in neighbouring States such as Mozambique, Angola and, to a lesser extent, Zimbabwe. This

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pattern has now moved to South Africa where the national liberation movement and the African communities are being destabilized with the intention of undermining their faith in us with the hope of turning the masses to follow Mr. de Klerk, who is now posing as a peacemaker. The neighbouring States were destabilized after independence and we have to be destabilized before independence because after our independence the forces of destabilization will be marginalized.

The imperialists' plan to set brother on brother has, by and large, failed. They have been unable to draw PAC directly into the fighting with other ranks of the oppressed. Our correct political analysis and apt slogans like "Peace amongst the Africans" ensure that PAC side-steps the designs of the enemies of genuine liberation. Strife, rivalry and violence amongst the oppressed African masses undermine and weaken their liberatory efforts and are inconsistent with genuine and total transformation of our society.

We will continue to work closely with ANC, the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) in a bid to end the violence and to prevent a "Beirut situation" in our country.

6. **The role of political hegemony**

The blame for the violence is not solely that of the regime. Sections of the liberation movement have used or are still using the barbaric necklace method to commit murders. Children run so-called "peoples' courts" with jungle justice and undemocratic civic practices. Unjustified and needless disruption of schooling and other areas of community life still persist. We call on the perpetrators of these acts to stop forthwith as they are opening the way for our enemies to co-opt those who in the process have become genuinely aggrieved, and allow external fermentation of violence.

We demand and welcome steps to form non-sectarian and democratic civic bodies and we implore all political tendencies to work together in harmony and democracy within civic structures. We must stand together as mature and wise people or perish together as fools.

7. **Africans attending the multi-party conference**

PAC can appreciate the motivation of those oppressed persons for attending Mr. de Klerk's meeting. We are tempted to state that we recognize their democratic right but, knowing that they do not yet have such, we regret that the oppressed did not meet together first, before their meeting with Mr. de Klerk. We appreciate their desire to see an end to the violence. We are

tempted to say that we appreciate their democratic right but, unfortunately, they are deprived of any such by the very Mr. de Klerk. We do not think that they will achieve much, as a crucial part of the agenda must be to advance the designs of the State.

Lastly, now more than ever, the historic imperative upon the oppressed is to form a solid alliance of progressive liberatory forces, encompassing all sections of the oppressed, in order to ensure the transference of power to a democratic majority and the formation of an economically just order that will fully address all fundamental questions, including the reconquest of the land.

Courtesy of the Centre against Apartheid